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VII.—*Extracts from a Spanish MS. giving an Account of certain Expeditions undertaken by Order of the King of Spain, between the Years 1749 and 1776, and of the Establishment of a Colony on the Island of Juan Fernandez.* Communicated by Woodbine Parish, Esq., F.R.S. Read 9th June, 1834.

THE notice which has appeared in the March Number of the bulletins of the French Geographical Society respecting a voyage performed in 1774 by the Spanish ship *Jupiter* has induced me to believe that some further account of the history of that voyage, and of some other undertakings by the Spaniards in previous years, to make themselves better acquainted with the southern shores of the Pacific, may be worth recording, tending, as they do, to complete the chain of our historical notices of the voyages of discovery in those seas, and affording, what cannot but be interesting to us in a national point of view, a striking evidence of the effects produced upon other nations by the enterprising spirit of our own navigators.

The Spaniards were not altogether so indifferent to the progress of maritime discovery in the last century as has been generally believed. Alarms for their own interests did occasionally rouse them, and, as will be seen, the publication of the voyages of our own great navigators stimulated them to exertions of which, till now, we have been in ignorance.

The history of some of those alarms, and of the measures which followed them, is given in the following passages extracted from a MS. report in my possession, drawn up by Don Manuel de Amat, the Viceroy of Lima, for the information and guidance of his successor in that government, in 1776. In an abstractly geographical sense they perhaps contain nothing new to us; but, as I have above stated, I think there are other grounds on which they may be deemed to be of interest.

Cook, on his last voyage, found traces of the visits of the Spaniards to Otaheite; and the accuracy of his account of them, so far as it goes, is strikingly corroborated by the Viceroy's narrative.

In point of date, the first proceedings of the Spaniards of which the Viceroy makes mention, may be referred to Commodore Anson's voyage, the account of which appeared in 1748. He says:—

“ By communications from the Court dated in May 1749, we were confidentially apprised that the British Government projected forming a settlement either on the island of Juan Fernandez, or in the archipelago of Chonos, in consequence of the reports made by Commodore Anson on his return from those seas of the great advantages which might be expected from such an establishment. The king, naturally alive to the consequences of such a project on the part of the English, and seeing how detrimental

it might prove to the peace and quiet of his majesty's dominions in these parts, desired that a ship-of-war should be immediately despatched to examine the said islands, as well as all the coasts to the southward, with orders to expel any foreign ship whatever which might be met with in any of the ports or possessions of his majesty in these seas. His majesty commanded that the island of Juan Fernandez should be peopled, and a suitable garrison immediately established there for its protection; and that further the archipelago of Chonos should be also carefully examined, and a survey made of all the ports and harbours found there; and that at the island of Inchin, described in Anson's voyage, a fort should be built and a garrison established sufficient to prevent any other occupation of it.

"In proceeding to inform your Excellency how these orders were executed, I shall commence with the islands of—

"*Juan Fernandez*.—These islands are two: the one called by us *de tierra*, generally known as Juan Fernandez, in 34° latitude, may be six or seven leagues in extent; the other is called *mas à fuera*, and lies about twenty-five leagues from the former in the same latitude. The first is convenient enough, and capable of subsisting a small population, although the extent of the lands fit for cultivation is inconsiderable; but *mas à fuera* is but a heap of rocks, where it is difficult to land, and still more so to find means of subsistence: there is, however, a great abundance of fish, especially of cod, which might prove a very valuable fishery to us, if our people would employ themselves in it.

"No time was lost in establishing a settlement on Juan Fernandez, conformably with the king's orders: besides the garrison, consisting of a company of infantry and the necessary staff, with twenty-two prisoners condemned to hard labour to assist in the works, 171 persons of both sexes, and of various ages and occupations, were safely landed, with cattle, mules, sheep, and a variety of poultry of all sorts, as well as a suitable supply of seeds and agricultural implements: eighteen guns were also sent for the fort. But this little colony had not long been settled when it was almost totally destroyed by the same dreadful earthquake which in the year 1751 overthrew the city of Concepcion in Chili: with the earthquake the sea rose, and overwhelmed the houses, most of which had unfortunately been built upon the sea-shore: thirty-five persons perished from this calamitous event, and amongst them the Governor with his wife and all his children. The President of Chili sent such relief as he could to remedy this disaster, and the settlement was rebuilt by my orders in a more convenient and safe position, further removed from the sea, under the superintendence of Don Manuel de Castel-blanco.

"On the rupture with England, in 1762, the President of Chili

would have withdrawn the garrison and broken up the settlement had I permitted it; but I considered it our duty rather to reinforce it with an additional company of infantry and such a supply of ammunition as would enable it to make a vigorous defence if necessary, of all which the king was pleased highly to approve. I was guided in this by recollecting the extreme distress in which Commodore Anson reached those islands; and that, destitute as he was of all succour, and his crews utterly helpless and reduced by sickness, he must have surrendered to any force we might have had there at the time; whereas from the want of such a force on our part, he was able to refit his ships and restore his invalids, so as afterwards to do the greatest injury to our interests in those parts—reasons, it appeared to me, sufficient to show the impolicy on our part of abandoning such a position.

“The expense of the settlement to the king, according to the estimates for the year 1753, was about 12,640 dollars.*

“*The Archipelago of Chonos* was examined as carefully as possible, in obedience to the same orders from his majesty.

“This group of islands lies in 45° and 46° of latitude, between the isles of Chiloe and Cape Tres Montes: from the circumstance of the *Anna* pink having been driven in, and having found shelter and refreshment there, Anson has given some account of this archipelago, which he considers would be a convenient position for a settlement, especially the island of *Inchin*: but our people, sent to examine the said islands, and who remained there some time, after a careful survey, especially of Anson’s *Inchin*, were entirely satisfied that they might be safely abandoned, as holding out no inducement whatever to any foreign nation to settle there, being entirely barren, frigid, and uninhabitable. The island of *Inchin* is known to the sailors on the coast of *Chili* by the name of *Tequegen*, and is occasionally frequented by the Indians of the neighbouring continent for the fish taken there: the English seized one of the boats of these Indian fishermen, and on asking

* Carteret appears to have been the first of our navigators who noticed this settlement. He gives the following account of it:—“10th of May, 1767, we made the island of *Juan Fernandez*. As I did not know that the Spaniards had fortified this island, I was greatly surprised to see a considerable number of men about the beach, with a house and four pieces of cannon near the water side, and a fort about 300 yards further from the sea, just upon the rising of a hill, with Spanish colours flying upon the top of it. The fort, which is faced with stone, has eighteen or twenty embrasures, and within it a long house which I supposed to be barracks for the garrison. Twenty-five or thirty houses of different kinds are scattered round it, and we saw much cattle feeding on the brow of the hills, which seemed to be cultivated, as many spots were divided by enclosures from each other.” I hoisted no colours, having none but English on board, which at this time I did not think proper to show. As I was disappointed of wood and water at this place, and of the refreshments, of which, after the dangers and fatigue of our voyage through the Straits, and our passage from it, we stood in the most pressing need, I made all the sail I could for the Island of *Masafuera*.—Vide *Hawkesworth’s Collection*.

how they called that island, were answered *Inchin*, which signifies in their language *It is ours*; and this mistake in the question put to them gave rise to the name given to it by the English.

"*The Islands of Chiloe* are of much greater consequence, and I consider them as the key to the King of Spain's possessions in the Pacific. In the year 1767," observes M. de Amat, "I was so impressed with this opinion that I thought it my duty to state to His Majesty that if the English had any further views of establishing themselves in these seas, there was no point so suitable for them as upon these islands; and I in consequence received His Majesty's commands to fortify the port of Lacuy, to send there a political and military governor with an allowance of 4000 dollars per annum, and to take every measure requisite for their security and protection. In former times they were subject to the Captain-Generalship of Chili; but considering the impediments to their communicating by land with that government, on account of the hostility of the intermediate Indians, and the want of opportunities by sea with Valparaiso, I thought it better at once to make them a direct dependency of this government of Lima, through which they received their succours and orders from Spain; an arrangement of which the king was pleased to approve by his royal letters of the 15th of October, 1768.

"These islands were first peopled by us in about 1565-9, during the government of Don José Garcia de Castro, in Peru, from whom the principal place takes its name of Castro. To the north, they are separated from Valdivia by the savage Indians who inhabit the intermediate coast; to the south lies the archipelago of Chonos and that chain of islands which extends to the Straits of Magellan. On the continent opposite, a Mission formerly existed, called Nahuilchuapy, for the reduction of the Indians to the Catholic religion, but it was destroyed by the savages, who put the missionaries to death.

"The principal entrance to this archipelago is in latitude 42°, and runs to 44°, where it is lost in another and wider channel. The population may be from 12 to 14,000 souls, of which about 2500 may be capable of bearing arms. The fortified places are Castro, St. Carlos, Chacao, Calbuco, and Maullin. The inhabitants grow wheat, maize, barley, and flax; but their principal food is the potatoe. The islands abound in useful timber, suited to ship-building. Cattle is scarce from the want of pasturage, but there are vast numbers of hogs: there is also plenty of fine fish, which might be turned to good account; and if the people were enterprising, they might make much of the numerous whales which resort to their coasts.

"The expense of the king's troops is annually about 26,883 dollars for the defence of these islands."

The visit of Byron to the Falkland Islands in 1765, and the still more formal occupation of those islands by Captain Macbride in the following year, seem to have confirmed the previous suspicions of the Spaniards as to the designs of the British Government to establish themselves in the South Seas. It was reported, that, not satisfied with the settlement on the Falklands, they had formed another on the coast in front of the islands of Chiloe; and the Viceroy states, that in consequence of these rumours, he was again ordered to examine all the ports and harbours to the southward, and to drive out the English wheresoever they might be found. An expedition for this purpose was accordingly fitted out, and sailed from Callao in October, 1770. No British settlement was discovered; and the further survey of the Chonos Islands only confirmed the opinion previously formed, of their total unfitness for any settlement whatever.

With these expeditions the Spaniards would probably have rested satisfied, but for the return of Cook from his first voyage, and the accounts circulated in Europe of the islands he had visited in the Pacific Ocean, especially of Otaheite, which appear to have excited no inconsiderable jealousy in Spain. Captain Cook returned in June, 1771, and in the following October orders were sent out to the Viceroy at Lima, accompanied by all the notices which could be collected as to the late British discoveries, to send an expedition immediately to examine the Society Islands, and particularly Otaheite, and to report upon the probable utility of those islands, their general state, resources, and population; and this measure was hastened by intelligence that the *Resolution* and *Endeavour* were again equipping in England to return to Otaheite, as was believed in Spain, to take formal possession of those islands in the name of his Britannic Majesty.

The Viceroy, referring to these orders, proceeds to relate, "that upon receipt of them, he fitted out the *Aguila* frigate under command of Don Domingo Bonechea. The *Aguila* sailed from Callao on the 26th of September, 1772, and reached Otaheite on the 10th of November following. On her return she was forced, on the 26th of March, 1773, to put into Valparaiso in a very crazy state, having been out just six months from Callao."

"Captain Bonechea made a most favourable report of the people of the Society Islands, by whom he had been kindly received and treated, in return for the presents he had taken out for them. He stated that no foreign power had as yet formed any permanent establishment either at Otaheite or in any of the adjacent isles; but he was told by the natives that the English had visited them a few months before his arrival. He brought away in the *Aguila* four of the natives, one of whom died at Valparaiso, and a second

afterwards at Lima ; the other two the Viceroy ordered to be well clothed and carefully attended to in his own palace, that, upon their return, as he says, they might be able to impress their countrymen with proper notions of civilization, and of the benevolence of the Spaniards. The whole of Bonechea's journals and observations on this voyage were forwarded to the King of Spain, in April 1773, together with a variety of specimens of the productions of the islands he had visited, and of the works and manufactures of the natives, proving them to be far from so uncivilized as might be supposed, and showing," says the Viceroy, "what useful dependents they might be made of the King of Spain. I could not," he adds, "but at the same time strongly express my own opinion to his majesty as to the great prejudice which would result to his dominions in these seas if any other power were permitted to take previous possession of them ; and the King, concurring in these views, sent out instructions, in October 1773, again to dispatch Captain Bonechea in the *Aguila* to make a more careful survey of Otaheite, and to report how far it might be desirable to form a Spanish establishment there. Captain Bonechea, in consequence, again sailed from Callao on the 20th of September, 1774, and reached Otaheite on the 27th of November. He had on board two Franciscan missionaries, Father Geronimo Clota, and Father Gonzalez, as well as the two natives brought away on the former voyage. In company with the frigate went the *Jupiter*, commanded by Don José Andia y Varela, carrying out a portable house, a linguist to be left at Otaheite with the missionary fathers, some sheep and cattle, and an assortment of seeds and implements.

"In about 260° longitude from Teneriffe*, they fell in with vast numbers of birds of various species, and shoals of flying fish.

"Bonechea found the harbour of Tallapura inconvenient ; but at Tatou-tira (Owhatow-tira) the ships had excellent anchorage : this port lies in 17° 45' latitude, on the south-east side of the island. According to his account, the island of Otaheite may be generally described as resembling a figure of 8 : it is from thirty-five to forty leagues in circumference, mountainous, and much covered with wood ; the water found there is excellent.

"The complexion of the inhabitants, though in some fairer and in some darker than in others, is generally of an olive cast ; from which and from the great similarity in the customs observed in the various islands examined in these seas, the Viceroy infers that the inhabitants are from one and the same common origin—most probably Asiatic, and deduced through those various groups of

* About 117° W. of London. The Spaniards estimate their longitude round the globe by the east.

islands which, on a reference to the chart, will be found to extend continuously between the equinoctial line and the tropic of Capricorn, from the Moluccas to the centre of the Pacific.

“In their religious notions and ceremonies, the Otaheiteans were found to be extremely superstitious and particular; but their chiefs, whom they call *eries*, are absolute rulers, with power of life and death over their vassals—a state of things,” the Viceroy observes, “which may conduce much to facilitate the introduction amongst them of the Catholic faith. The numbers of these people could hardly be estimated without a careful survey of the interior of the island. They breed pigs and dogs, for which they have a high value, and a small sort of domestic poultry; they have besides an abundance of wild fowl in great variety.

“The plantain and walnut-tree were found there, with many unknown fruits of an agreeable taste, and cocoa-nuts equal to those of Guayaquil: the sugar-cane also, but the inhabitants did not appear to understand its uses. The climate in general was humid and warm.

“The Otaheiteans are expert in the management of their canoes, in which they pass from one island to another: they use sails made from the bark of the palm-tree.

“Unfortunately, in the midst of his investigations Captain Bonechea fell sick and died: he was buried on the 26th of January, 1775, by the missionary fathers, at the foot of a cross which they had erected on their first landing. His loss was irreparable, and the frigate returned to Callao, arriving there six months and eighteen days from her departure. The Jupiter also came in a few days afterwards, bringing four more of the natives, who were as kindly received as their countrymen had been previously.

“The result of this voyage was the examination of twenty-one islands, nine of which were low, and the others lofty. A particular account of them, as well as the track of the frigate correctly laid down, and all the details of the interesting expedition, were immediately forwarded to Spain.

“In a few months,” the Viceroy states that, “becoming anxious to learn the fate of the missionaries, and their progress amongst the natives, he determined to send the *Aguila* back again. She sailed accordingly on a third voyage the 27th of September, 1775, under the command of Don Cayetano de Langara, of the Royal Navy. One of the natives brought away by Bonechea returned in her, but nothing could induce his companion (the other two had died) to leave Peru.

“Captain Langara was made fully acquainted with the king’s views, and received his instructions and orders accordingly. With respect to the missionaries, he was to ascertain whether they were willing to remain or not in their avocation; and, in any event, he

was to receive from them all the information they had been able to collect.

“The *Aguila* was out upon this voyage 143 days: she reached the port of *Tatou-tira* in thirty-six days, remained there ten, and was at *Callao* again on the 17th of February, 1776; having followed much the same track as on the preceding voyage.

“On reaching *Otaheite*, Captain *Langara* found a positive determination on the part of the missionaries not to remain there. In vain he exerted himself to induce them to recollect their particular vocation, and to persist in the glorious work they had been sent upon, viz., the conversion of the infidels to Christianity. Fear seemed to have taken the place of all that holy zeal which ought to have animated them, and they were obstinate in their resolution to give up entirely their original pious undertaking. Nothing but a Spanish garrison in the place would have been sufficient to induce them to stay where they were. They had made not the slightest progress in the conversion of the natives, of whom they lived in continual dread; and this appeared the more strange, since the linguist, who had been alone over every part of the island, declared that the people everywhere showed the most docile and amiable disposition, and were marked in their expressions of respect for the fathers. He reported, that the island was well peopled, and that the inhabitants, as far as he could judge, could not be fewer than 150,000; that they were governed by two principal Eries or chiefs, having others subordinate to them; the one rules on the western side of the island, called *Opuré*, the harbour of which is *Matauvai*, where the English astronomers had passed some time, giving the natives sheep, goats, dogs, pigs, cats, and geese: they had also distributed amongst them coloured cloths and a quantity of small gilt medals, dated 1772, having on one side the likeness of their king, *George III.*, crowned with laurels, and on the other, two ships on the seas. The other principal Erie resides on the opposite side of the island, near the port of *Tatou-tira*, where the portable house of the missionaries was erected. From this chief, as well as from his wife and all his people, the fathers had experienced every kindness; and when their intention to go away was known, they showed their grief in the most marked manner, being only consoled with the assurance that they would speedily return amongst them. To satisfy them on this head, the portable house and its contents were, in the mean time, recommended to their especial care.

“The missionaries had been frightened at witnessing the sacrifices made by these people to their gods, for the health of their Eries. Not content, it appears, with offering up animals, they did not hesitate also to sacrifice human beings at the shrines of their *Eatua* or divinities. The same barbarous ceremonies, it was

understood, were practised on the succession of their chiefs, whose power is hereditary, and whereby it was supposed that their good and prosperous government was ensured.

“Nevertheless, and in spite of these idolatrous practices, these people have very proper notions of right and wrong, and believe in the immortality of the soul; and although they were perfectly acquainted with the character of our missionaries, it did not appear that their heathenish customs in any way prevented their treating them with great kindness and respect. In fact, excepting some trifling instances of theft, from which these people can with difficulty refrain if temptation be thrown in their way, the fathers had no cause to complain; and even in these instances, the offenders were almost always denounced, and on complaint to the Erie, the stolen articles were returned, and the delinquents would have been thrown into the sea, had not the fathers interceded to save their lives.

“It is evident, however,” observes the viceroy, “that those selected for the conversion of such infidels should be either endowed with the ardour and constancy of our holy apostles, or at least should be possessed of such a knowledge of some of those useful or mechanical arts of which these idolaters are ignorant, as might ensure for them such a measure of esteem and influence as would mainly assist them in the propagation of the doctrines of Christianity and civilization. Such qualifications,” he adds, “would certainly produce a strong impression upon these people, who might thus be brought, without much difficulty, to embrace the Catholic faith.

“Captain Langara received some account of another island, of some importance, called Orairoa (either Roggewin’s Carlshoff, or Byron’s Isle of Disappointment—according to Forster, *Orimaroa*), distant from Otaheite, in a N.N.E. direction, about forty leagues, from some of the natives, who had fled to Otaheite after a battle, in which they had been defeated by their enemies. They said that the English ships had been also there; and they reported, amongst other things, that pearls were found there, but our people saw none of them.”

Cook’s account of these visits of the Spaniards to Otaheite is as follows. In the narrative of his Second Voyage, in 1773, he says:—“Soon after our arrival, we were informed that a ship, about the size of the *Resolution*, had been at Owpaïurua Harbour, near the south-east end of the island, where she remained about three weeks, and had been gone about three months before we arrived. We were told, that four of the natives were gone away in her, &c. &c.

“At this time we conjectured this was a French ship, but on our arrival at the Cape of Good Hope, we learnt she was a

Spaniard, which had been sent out from America. The Otaheitan complained of a disease communicated to them by the people in this ship," &c. &c.

On reaching Otaheite, in 1777, on his third and last voyage, Captain Cook says, "he was then told by the natives, that two ships had twice been in Oheitepeha Bay since his last visit to the island in 1774, and that they had left animals there, such as the English had on board: but, on further inquiry," he adds, "we found they were only hogs, dogs, goats, one bull, and the male of some other animal, which, from the imperfect description now given us, we could not find out. They told us, that these ships had come from a place called *Reema*; by which we guessed that Lima, the capital of Peru, was meant, and that the late visitors were Spaniards. We were informed, that the first time they came, they built a house, and left four men behind them; viz., two priests, a boy or servant, and a fourth person, called *Mateema*, who was much spoken of at this time: carrying away with them four of the natives: that in about ten months the same two ships returned, bringing back two of the islanders, the other two having died at Lima; and that, after a short stay, they took away their own people, but that the house which they had built was left standing.

"I found it (the house) at a small distance from the beach; the wooden materials of which it was composed seemed to have been brought here ready prepared to be set up occasionally, for all the planks were numbered; it was divided into two small rooms, and in the inner one were a bedstead, a table, a bench, some old hats, and other trifles; of which the natives seemed very careful, as also of the house itself, which had suffered no hurt from the weather, a shed having been built over it. At a little distance from the front stood a wooden cross, on the transverse part of which was cut the following inscription,—'Christus vincit:' and on the perpendicular part (which confirmed our conjecture that the ships were Spanish)—'Carolus III. imperat 1774.' On the other side of the post, I preserved the memory of the prior visits of the English by inscribing—'Georgius Tertius Rex, annis 1767, 1769, 1773, 1774, and 1777.'

"The natives pointed out to us, near the foot of the cross, the grave of the commodore of the two ships, who had died there while they lay in the bay the first time: his name, as they pronounced it, was *Oreede*. Whatever the intentions of the Spaniards in visiting this island might be, they seemed to have taken great pains to ingratiate themselves with the inhabitants; who, upon every occasion, mention them with the strongest expressions of esteem and veneration."
